

The Health Care Monitor

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Army Dr. (Col.) Renata Engler, medical director of the Vaccine Health Care Center Network said, "The contamination of the mail with anthrax has made the threat of bioterrorism clear to Americans".

TRICARE Northwest

DoD works to better educate health care workers on vaccine safety

By Sgt. 1st Class
Kathleen T.
Rhem, USA
American Forces
Press Service

WASHING-
TON, Nov. 5,
2001 -- Military
allergy and im-
munization spe-
cialists have
worked hard to
educate health-
care providers on
vaccine safety.
But in light of
rising bioterror-
ism concerns,
they've ratcheted

up their efforts.

Army Dr.
(Col.) Renata
Engler is the
medical director
of the Vaccine
Healthcare Cen-
ter Network,
which recently
opened its first
center here at
Walter Reed
Army Medical
Center. She ex-
plained that vac-
cines are tools to
protect DoD's
members, but
they also need to
be afforded the

same care, re-
spect and safety
precautions given
other prescription
medicines.

DoD and the
Centers for Dis-
ease Control and
Prevention in At-
lanta became
partners this sum-
mer to provide a
network of clear-
inghouses for
information on
vaccine safety
and procedures
throughout DoD.

The new initia-
tive was in re-

sponse to "the
growing chal-
lenges that have
arisen in the con-
text of immuniza-
tion healthcare,"
Engler said, par-
ticularly concern-
ing the public
controversies sur-
rounding immu-
nization safety in
general as well as
the DoD Anthrax
Vaccine Immuni-
zation Program
specifically.

*(See Vaccine
page 5)*

TRICARE Online available to 8.4 million beneficiaries worldwide

By: John Grantham
Office of the Lead
Agent
Clinical Staff Officer

The Department
of Defense (DoD)
manages the one
of the largest

healthcare sys-
tems in the
world – TRI-
CARE. It is no
wonder then that
DoD has taken a
*(See TRICARE
page 6)*



"Reservists will be away from home longer than military personnel have at any time since WWII". (Source LA Times Oct 19, 2001)

U.S. Navy Photo

Bremerton Five-star employee

By: Judith Robertson, PAO
Naval Hospital Bremerton

NAVAL HOSPITAL, BREMERTON -- Elsie Thompson helps the Naval Hospital wake up each morning.

Thompson, an employee of the Navy Exchange system for over 11 years, is the steady anchor in the coffee shop at the hospital on the "wake-up" shift, and she's been doing it with a smile for eight years.

Hospital officials, responding to a write-up on a 5-Star Customer Service Employee form, named Thompson the 5-Star Service Employee for Sept. The letter said Thompson should be chosen as 5-Star recipient because of her "consistent, pleasant manner, excellent coffee beverages, and her dedication to her customers."

"I'm shocked, but I'm happy," Thompson said when hospital Commanding Officer Capt. Christine Hunter and

Capt. Duncan Barlow, radiologist (and enthusiastic coffee drinker), presented her with the award.

Thompson, who serves between 60 to 80 customers a day,



Capt. Duncan Barlow, (l.) radiologist, holds his usual super-charged latte high in honor of Elsie Thompson, as the Navy Exchange employee is presented with the hospital's 5-Star Service Employee award for Sept. Doing the honors is Naval Hospital Commanding Officer Capt. Christine Hunter.

Photo By: Judith Robertson

said she has about 40 percent of her customers' "usuals" memorized, and although that may be seen as just routine work for any barista, Thompson always

seems to go "above and beyond."

"Elsie always seems to make it to work," the write-up continued, "whether it be during last year's snow storm or the more recent events that kept everyone at home. (Note: Elsie was at her post, keeping "essential" personnel fueled during the grueling hours surrounding the events of Sept. 11).

"Elsie's efforts directly impact the morale and productivity of the command, Hunter said, adding "It is a pleasure to recognize her as part of the Naval Hospital team."

"I just enjoy serving coffee to my customers, and I have some very good friends in the hospital and I want to thank them for their support," Thompson said.

A native of the Philippines, Thompson now lives in Bremerton with husband David and daughters, Samantha, 15 and Renae, 13.

Hospital staff help in neighborhood cleanup

By: Judith Robertson, PAO

NAVAL HOSPITAL, BREMERTON -- The Naval Hospital's 1st Class Petty Officer's Association has cleaned its adopted stretch of highway near the Bremerton Airport for years, but re-

cently hospital staff of all ranks joined together to commit a neighborly act closer to home.

Spearheaded by HMCS Brad Lipert, staff members took to the streets, trash bags in hand patrolling an area from the hospital entrance to the temporary parking lot

at the Chico "Pee Wee" ball field a few blocks away.

Many of the hospital staff are parking on the streets or in the loaned ball field due to the change in parking arrangements, and that's what prompted Lipert to act. Putting out a call in

the Plan of the Day, Lipert asked for volunteers to assist as "a show of good faith and community spirit to the City of Bremerton and the owner of the ball field."

(See **CLEANUP** page 6)



Genetics counselor provides a wealth of information to TRICARE customers by offering genetic testing for many medical conditions

By: SSG Mary Bodine
Mountaineer Editor
Madigan Army Medical Center

Recent advances in the field of genetics have resulted in the increased availability of genetic testing for many medical conditions. As the field of genetics has grown, so has the demand for professionals that specialize in genetic counseling. Genetic testing for familial cancer syndromes, prenatal diagnosis and pediatric evaluation is currently available at Madigan Army Medical Center and the Western Regional Medical Command (WRMC).

Madigan recently expanded the focus of its genetic counseling service from a breast cancer program to a resource that provides genetic risk assessment for a range of medical conditions. Genetic testing can be indicated at varying stages of the life cycle from prenatal diagnosis to presymptomatic testing for adult onset conditions.

To fulfill the requirements of the expanded genetic

counselor position, the Western Regional Medical Command hired Sarah A. Bradford, who has a specialized master of science degree in medical genetics and counseling.

"The patients that are referred for this service are typically at increased risk for varying genetic conditions, specifically familial cancer syndromes (breast, ovarian and colon cancers) and genetic conditions diagnosed pre- and postnatally," Bradford said. "It is my goal to educate physicians and other health care providers about the genetic counseling service at MAMC and the medical and ethical complexities associated with genetic testing. Additionally I am working to

make this service equally accessible to all Department of Defense beneficiaries in the WRMC. The primary focus of a genetic counselor is to assist patients in making in-

formed decisions about genetic testing and its emerging role in health care."

A patient is referred to Bradford from a physician or other health care provider based on family and/or personal

medical histories.

These are typically patients experiencing high levels of anxiety due to their perception of risk, Bradford said.

"When I meet with a new patient, much time is spent reviewing medical and family

histories to assess the level of risk for a specific condition," she said. "This is accomplished by completing a detailed medical questionnaire, reviewing medical records and obtaining a family history, known as a pedigree."

Once the level of risk for a specific condition has been assessed, time is then spent reviewing the complexities of the specific genetic condition in addition to discussing the implication of pursuing a genetic test. After the consultation, some patients will pursue genetic testing where others will decline.

Patients need to become advocates for themselves in our increasingly complex medical system and I feel strongly that education is the key to patient success."

A medical provider, patient, family member or health care agency can arrange an appointment with Bradford. For more information, call Bradford at 968-0786, or e-mail at: Sarah.Bradford@nw.amedd.army.mil.



Sara Bradford, Genetics Counselor

Oak Harbor helps customers refill prescriptions with ease by changing sites

Naval Hospital Oak Harbor helps customers refill with ease by changing sites

By Sara McGruder,
NHOH Public Affairs

Naval Hospital Oak Harbor-- has a new location for its pharmacy refill pick up site. This is a recent change in response to September 11. The new site is the former

Cashier's Cage in the NEX building at Seaplane Base. The change of location was made in October.

Even with the current gate security measures in effect, the wait to get on base is short. It is hoped that customers can com-

bine picking up medication refills with shopping on base.

Refill requests will continue to be accepted through the same methods as before 24-hours a day, 7 days a week by an automated system. The system will

require each caller to select a site to pick up the refill -- the Seaplane base or the hospital site.

The hospital site will continue to allow refill pick up from 6:30 AM - 8 PM daily.

(See **REFILL** page 6)

CORPSMAN AWARDS



HMI J. L. Smith



HM3 Brett Donnan

CIVILIAN AWARDS



Mr. Patrick Koether



Mr. Edward L. Lee

Bremerton's 3rd quarter top achievers

By: Judith Roberson
PAO
Naval Hospital
Bremerton

The search for the 3rd quarter's top Naval Hospital Bremerton sailors ended at the hospital's Branch Medical Clinic, Bangor.

Senior Sailor of the Quarter honors go to Hospital Corpsman 1st Class (FMF/PJ) J. L. Smith, an Independent Duty Corpsman serving as the Leading Chief Petty Officer of the BMC Bangor's Primary Care and Family Care

clinics.

Junior Sailor of the Quarter selection goes to Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class (SW) Bret Donnan a radiology technician and Leading Petty Officer in the Radiology Dept. at BMC Bangor.

Ex-Chiefs are top civilians at Naval Hospital Bremerton

The evidence speaks for itself. To become a highly respected and appreciated civilian employee, begin by achieving

the rank of Chief Hospital Corpsman. That was the path taken by both the Senior Civilian and Civilian of the Quarter at the Naval Hospital.

Edward L. Lee, RN, CHES, head of the Patient Education Div. of the Health Education Dept., is the Senior Civilian for the 3rd Quarter.

Patrick Koether, a Medical Support Representative in the Emergency Room, is honored as Civilian of the Quarter.

Computer security desktop reference guide

By: Don R. New
Systems Analyst
TRICARE Northwest, Office
of the Lead Agent

There are 5 actions every person can take to secure their personal or work computer.

1. Update your anti-virus protection. Check daily to determine if a new update for your virus protection software has

been released and if so, update immediately. Scan your computer weekly (all files) for viruses and scan any floppy before using it.

2. Recognize that email is your enemy. Delete all email from individuals you do not know. Consider that all email contains a possible virus. Most viruses introduced

into your computer will come from email.

3. Back up your important data. Don't wait for a hard drive crash or a virus rendering your computer worthless before you realize that you need specific data that has been lost because you did not take the time to backup your important data.

4. Do not share your passwords. A shared password is like having no password.

5. If you use DSL or cable modem to gain entrance to the Internet, install a personal software firewall. Hackers can and will use your computer for illegal purposes should you leave it unprotected.

(Vaccine continued from page 1)

"Knowledgeable resources had to be developed to support the providers and the small outlying immunization clinics who are dealing with the challenges and to support special, complex patient issues that local medical facilities might not be resourced to handle," she said.

Engler said her work has come into a whole new light in the aftermath of Sept. 11 -- the contamination of the mail with anthrax has made the threat of bioterrorism clear to Americans.

She said her organization has been involved in developing plans for possible new or changing vaccination programs for service members. Any possible use of smallpox vaccine is of particular concern, since America's stockpiles of vaccine for this

deadly, disfiguring disease are old and were made with outdated technology, experts have said. Engler and her staff are consulting with various agencies to work up contingency plans in case experts decide there's a need to vaccinate Department of Defense as well as emergency response personnel against smallpox, she said.

"There are some concerns about adverse events related to that vaccine," Engler said. "We've gotten busier faster than we wanted to in response to new bioterrorism threats that are arising." But this is why the organization was created in the first place. "The Vaccine Healthcare Center is really a resource to address the need for outreach education in this rapidly changing world of immunization challenges," Engler said.

"We need to do everything we can to give the right shot to the right person at the right time in the right way."

She said service members 20 years ago received "a handful" of vaccines, but now routinely take more than 50 shots during their careers. And another 30 vaccines are at various stages of the developmental pipeline and may be introduced into the immunization requirements over the next five years.

Adverse reactions and drug reactions occur in 1 percent to 2 percent of people with any drug, Engler said. That small percentage, she noted, can mean big problems in a large enough population. "That's 20,000 to 40,000 people in a population of 2 million," she said. "Improving our understanding of rare adverse events would enhance

vaccine safety surveillance and lead to higher quality immunization healthcare delivery overall."

The Vaccine Healthcare Center Initiative began in September and is scheduled to expand to include several regional centers in the future. Several more are set to open in regional DoD medical centers in the United States in 2002, leading up to a total of 15 regional centers by 2006, Engler said. "These vaccine healthcare centers would work as a network to share information, not just internally but with the Food and Drug Administration, CDC, and the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System, too, as questions arise surrounding a vaccine," she said.

Preparing for Terrorism: A Guide for Families

Information provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency

A terrorist attack would likely come without any warning. The best way to prepare is to have a disaster plan in place. Your family should create a plan that includes emergency contacts, identification information, meeting locations, disaster supply kit and more. Be sure to practice your plan. Terrorism does not mean you have to change your life, just be prepared. **Identify Meeting Locations:** Most families are not together 24 hours a day. You should consider how family members will find each other in a disaster situation. Meeting location points should be identified for the

most commonly frequented locations, such as work or school. For example, if a crisis occurs at school, a location for both parents and children to meet should be in your plan.

Before, During and After a Terrorist Incident

Before

Be alert and aware of your surroundings.

Take precautions when traveling. Be aware of conspicuous or unusual behavior.

Do not accept packages from strangers. Do not leave luggage unattended. Learn where emergency exits are located.

Be ready to enact your Family

Disaster Plan.

During

Building Explosion – leave as quickly and calmly as possible.

If items are falling from above – get under a sturdy table or desk.

Fire – stay low to the floor and exit as quickly as possible. Cover nose and mouth with a wet cloth. If a door is hot to the touch, do not open it – seek an alternate escape route. Stay below the smoke at all times.

After

If you are trapped in debris – use a flashlight. Cover your mouth with a piece of cloth. Tap on a pipe or

wall so that rescuers can hear where you are. Use a whistle if available and shout as a last resort – shouting can result in inhalation of dangerous amounts of dust.

Assisting victims – untrained persons should not attempt to rescue people in a collapsed building. Wait for emergency personnel to arrive.

Chemical Agent

– Authorities will instruct you to either seek shelter and seal the premises or evacuate immediately.

– Develop Family Emergency Contact List Put these contact numbers on your refrigerator and in your wallet or purse.

(See Guide page 6)

(CLEANUP continued from page 2)

"We're using public property and private property for our benefit," Lipert said. "I wanted some way to show that we are being good neighbors. I wanted to help them out and show our appreciation so I posed the question to the Command Master Chief (CMDMC Richard Lopez, who joined in the efforts), and he gave the thumbs up."

Lipert said, in the short time it took the crew to patrol the area, they amassed about a dozen bags.



Senior Chief Hospital Corpsman Brad Lipert leads the charge along neighborhood streets in a cleanup campaign. With him are Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Vilma Bauer and (rear) Hospitalman Melissa Casey, part of the crew that picked up trash in September.

PHOTO By: HM2 Julie Jorgensen

(REFILL continued from page 3)

The Seaplane base refill site is open from 9:00AM – 1:00 PM and 1:30 PM to 5:00 PM, Monday - Saturday excluding holidays. Refills will be available for pick up 48 hours after call in and will be available for pick up for 7-days from the date of call in.

Patients with prescriptions for antibiotics and other acute condition drugs are requested to either take their prescription to the hospital site or get them filled through a TRICARE network pharmacy. For further information please send an e-mail to raatienza@nhoh.med.navy.mil or call 257-9707.

(TRICARE continued from page 1)

step to bring that health-care system into the 21st century by creating an enterprise website designed for the 8.4 million beneficiaries world-wide – TRICARE Online.

TRICARE Online will provide online customer services, sound medical

advice and information, and the ability to book appointments with your primary doctor without having to use the phone or wait in line.

"TRICARE Online is the first central effort to develop a global web presence for all TRICARE beneficiaries,"

(GUIDE continued from page 5)

Out-of-town Family Contact
Schools
Work
Neighbors
County Emergency Management
911

Family Disaster Plan

- Discuss the type of hazards that could affect your family.
- Determine escape routes from your home and places to meet; including a child's school, a neighbor or a public place.
- Have an out-of-state friend as a family contact, so all your family members have a single point of contact. Have at least two ways of contact, e-mail, telephone, etc.
- Make a plan now for what to do with your pets if you need to evacuate.
- Post emergency telephone numbers by your telephones and in your wallet or purse, and make sure your

said Lt. Col. Gregory Andre Marinkovich, Madigan Army Medical Center's Chief of Medical Informatics and TRICARE Northwest's Project Officer for TRICARE Online.

Beneficiaries will be able to do more as TRICARE Online grows over the next several years. "Future customer services will include refilling prescriptions, enrolling in TRICARE, and requesting specialty care authorizations," accord-

children know how and when to call 911.

Stock non-perishable emergency supplies and a disaster supply kit.

-Take First Aid, CPR and disaster preparedness classes.

Disaster Supply Kit

Water – At least 1 gallon daily per person for 3 to 7 days.

Food – At least enough for 3 to 7 days

Blankets / Pillows, etc.

Clothing

First Aid Kit/ Medicines

Special Items – for babies or elderly

Toiletries

Moisture wipes

Flashlight/ Batteries

Radio – Battery operated and NOAA weather radio.

Cash – Banks and ATMs may not be open or available for extended periods.

Keys

Toys, Books and Games

Important documents

Tools

Vehicle fuel tanks filled

Pet care items

Duct Tape

ing to Marinkovich.

Initially, the website will offer patients the convenience of scheduling non-urgent appointments with their primary care physicians. Customers will have and be able to personalize their own TRICARE Online homepage. "We want to empower customers to manage their own health-care," Marinkovich explained. A demon of TRICARE at <http://www.tricareonline.com>.